My Future as an English Communication Teacher

TM 87 TESOL Final Essay Yong Woo

Before my TESOL training, I thought the most important thing for being a teacher of English communication was English language skill. But after six weeks of TESOL training I realized being genuine and completely open to the class is even more important in an English communication class.

I know living eight years in the USA as a young child had a big impact on my life. After six weeks of TESOL training I was also aware that it had changed my way of viewing English. The core characteristics of a great teacher are respect, empathy, and authenticity. Because of my childhood experience of living in the USA, I learned I have a hard time empathizing with my students when they are having difficulties learning English. As a TESOL teacher I have to work extra hard to empathize with my students. Learning about my differences and always being mindful will help narrow the gap between me and the students.

While the English learning experience during middle school and high school was not that memorable, it was the way most Korean students first experienced English learning. When doing the grammar micro teaching in TESOL training most of the students got the grammar more easily after they hear the name of the grammar. So when I teach English as a TESOL teacher I will put parts that are familiar to the students and tie-in with their past English education when they were in middle school and high school.

Activities centered on debate make great communication lessons. I always thought of the only structure of debates were like the one we see on TV - two opposing sides with one moderator. My experience with argumentative debates in class was eye opening. It was more focused on communication and the students had a greater chance to interact with other students. When I have debates in my class I will use the argumentative debate format more.

When I was writing my first essay I thought being an enabler teacher was the only way to get the students involved in the lesson and the explainer style teaching always made students bored. But after doing two micro teachings I saw that there are no bad styles. Explainer, involver, enabler styles all had a part in making a good environment for students to learn English communication. If I don’t get the students engaged in the lesson the students will still be bored even when I’m teaching as an enabler. I learned the most important thing is to get the students involved in the lesson and change the style of teaching to fit the mood and the atmosphere of the classroom.

When I thought about an English class, the only activities I knew were group discussions and teaching English using a board. Doing activities like jigsaw and role playing help me see more ways to get the students interested in the lesson. Now I know there are many ways to get the students involved in a lesson. As a TESOL English teacher I’ll try new way of getting the students involved in a lesson.

Also writing a lesson plan before the lesson start helps me plan for a better lesson for getting the students engaged. All the activities in the lesson have to be focused on communication. Looking at the activities and asking “Can this activity be done without communication?” and changing the activity when the answer is yes to an activity which requires communication helped me plan a lesson with more focus on communication.